



# SIERRA CLUB BULLETIN

*November*  
1949

# Miscellany

Berkeley, November 9

Editor—

I today received the October bulletin which is up to the usual high standards of typography. However it arrived rather wet and bedraggled, sans envelope. I realize that the club has far more important things to worry about than the envelopes. Nevertheless, I would strongly recommend that such an attractive publication deserves the protection of an envelope in mailing (especially during the damp part of the year).

DAVID TILLES

•We have received very few comments from others on how they receive their Bulletins. We personally checked in Los Angeles and found that unenveloped copies arrived in perfect shape. Our own, however, looked as if the postman had either used it to keep the rain off his head or had left it on the outside of a nonwaterproof mail box. Our suggestion: (a) buy a water proof Life- or Post-sized mailbox (as we have done), or (b) live in Los Angeles where it doesn't rain so often. We save too much in eliminating envelopes to be able to afford to go back to them.

If this copy, too, arrives wet, be waiting for the postman in two days, when the December issue should arrive.

From Wolf G. Bauer, of The Mountaineers, Morgan Harris, chairman of the Mountain-

eering Committee, has received a clipping from *Der Bergkamerad*. The article, according to Bauer, boils down to the following:

"Anyone wishing to become a member of the Sierra Club must first make a rope climb during which he must first allow himself to fall, and if he conducts himself well in this fall, he must allow himself to be secured and rescued. Only after that has he earned the honor to be admitted to your club. Needless to say, such goings on in America can well be accepted as fact by many Europeans who judge us by Hollywood and the antics of some of our occupation personnel."

In case there are any Sierra Club members who have feared that just this procedure is followed by the rock climbers, we can only protest that it never has, does not, and never will.

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<i>Photo credits: Cover, Mounts Asperity and Tiedemann, from Mount Argiewicz, by Fletcher Hoyt; pages 6 (top) and 7, Einar Nilsson; page 6 (bottom) David R. Brower.</i>	

**THE SIERRA CLUB**, founded in 1892, has devoted itself to the study and protection of national scenic resources, particularly those of the mountain regions of the Pacific Coast. Since these resources receive best protection from those who know them well, the club has long conducted educational activities, under the committees listed below, to make them known. Participation is invited in the program to preserve wilderness, wildlife, forests, and streams.

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# Sierra Club Bulletin

VOLUME 34 NOVEMBER, 1949 NUMBER 10

... TO EXPLORE, ENJOY, AND PROTECT THE NATURAL MOUNTAIN SCENE ...

## For the November Record

### White Mountain Rises

More than a year ago we heard rumors that a resurvey of White Mountain Peak by the U.S.G.S. had indicated that the elevation should be 200 feet higher than previously shown. This had us all excited and we were prepared to make front page news of it when it was confirmed. The implications were fabulous. Another 200 feet would bring the total to 14,442—higher than any peak in Colorado or Washington, thereby giving California first and second place in its heights.

We set our operative Wilbur Vaughan to work digging into the Sacramento files of the U.S.G.S. Topographic office and held page one for the story. The results, we regret to state, are disappointing. White Mountain Peak gets an additional 12 feet—that is all. We haven't checked with the national list; the only immediate change in order in California is that White Mountain Peak now tops North Palisade by 2 feet. It becomes third highest in the state. If our arithmetic is correct, its elevation is 14,256.

### Warning on Carabiners

Three carabiners reported to have been purchased from the Seattle Recreational Equipment Cooperative since the war have failed under exceedingly light loads. One, in use as a direct aid on the last pitch of Split Pinnacle, snapped in two under the weight of the leader with the resulting

fall being held by the second man and a lower piton. Another was in the process of being straightened after an afternoon of holding practice falls. It broke in half with the first hammer blow. A third carabiner lost all its hinge teeth from causes unknown.

These carabiners are now undergoing tests in the University of California Metallurgy Laboratories which will show the cause of failure. From the evidence at hand it is probable that the failures will not show up in a non-destructive test so it is impossible to tell whether your carabiner will be liable to future failure under a light impact load—and any fall will result in at least a light impact load.

A letter from Lloyd Anderson of the Coop indicates that these faulty carabiners came from Switzerland. Mountaineers will probably conclude that postwar Swiss carabiners should be treated with suspicion and possibly doubled or tripled as the lead warrants. I, personally, would throw mine away.

ROBIN HANSEN

[Mr. Anderson feels that it is the "straightening" of the carabiners which has weakened them. It has been a common practice to restore the ovals to their original shape, after a series of test falls, by a few taps from the hammer. There have been no previous indications that this has weakened carabiners. In any event, we should hesitate to trust climbing equipment which could not withstand a few blows. The SCB will publish the results of tests now under way. Ed.]

# The Wilderness Society—An Introduction

By HOWARD ZAHNISER

IN OUR GOOD American system for conducting affairs for the common welfare, each particular aspect of the public interest sooner or later is expressed in an organization. So it was, a few years ago, when road-building programs and other projects for exploiting our natural scene threatened dramatically to destroy the last remnants of our American wilderness, when it became clear that wilderness preservation would have to become an objective of public policy, there developed an organization called The Wilderness Society—a concrete expression of the national will—the American determination—to see the American wilderness preserved.

In the February 1930 issue of *Scientific Monthly* the late Robert Marshall concluded his now classic article on "The Problem of the Wilderness"\* with the militant statement:

There is just one hope of repulsing the tyrannical ambition of civilization to conquer every niche on the whole earth. That hope is the organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom of the wilderness.

Five years later The Wilderness Society was formed—a realization of Bob Marshall's hope, brought into being and sustained to a great extent through the inspiration and support of Bob Marshall himself. In a very real sense The Wilderness Society is an example of Ralph Waldo Emerson's definition of an institution as "the lengthened shadow of one man." That man is Robert Marshall. We honor his memory and strive to emulate his remarkable and effective combination of a zealous devotion to an ideal with a reliance on research and investigation for a basis of action. We are inspired to see that his lengthened shadow is still lengthening.

*The Living Wilderness*, the quarterly publication of The Wilderness Society, carries at the top of each first page Bob Marshall's phrase "for the freedom of the wilderness." There are at least three good meanings for that phrase. For one thing

The Wilderness Society is fighting to keep our dedicated wilderness areas—our remnants of primitive America—free from the invasions, the encroachments, the inconsistent uses that would destroy them as wilderness, or impair them. Then, too, it is a society of people who earnestly want the freedom to enjoy wilderness, to have wild areas accessible and available not only to themselves but to all others, men and women and girls and boys—now and in the long future. And in a broad sense we are thinking too of the sort of freedom that individuals and society as a whole can realize if we maintain our access to wilderness.

The by-laws of The Wilderness Society say:

This Society shall be composed of individuals who feel that the entire nation and they themselves are losing something of value when a highway is built in a wilderness, when a primeval forest is logged, when airplanes bring the noise of urban life into a wilderness and destroy the charm of remoteness, or when mechanical civilization encroaches in any way on the last remnants of wildness left for themselves and their posterity. The Society shall be composed of individuals who want to do something to forestall this destruction of the remaining wilderness, who because of their human sentiments toward the primeval out-of-doors are determined to protect and preserve such areas, and who therefore are united on these principles:

1) The wilderness is a valuable natural resource that belongs to the people, and the people must be enlisted in its preservation.

2) Wilderness areas must be forever kept free from the sights and sounds of mechanical civilization—motorized transportation, commerce, and all the influences which clash with the primeval environment or detract from its full enjoyment.

3) Wilderness preservation is a part of the conservation of soil, water, forests, and wildlife, and the conservation of all these resources is essential to the survival of our civilized culture.

That is the Society's forthright statement of the kind of people who comprise it and the common belief which brings

\*Reprinted in *SCB*, 32:5 (May, 1947), pp. 43-52.

them together into such a Society. That statement gives expression also to the Society's emotional basis for its existence; it is composed of people who *feel* deeply about the wilderness. These people, however, have a carefully well-thought-out calculated purpose in supporting this organization—an instrument designed with definite objects:

To secure the preservation of wilderness:

To carry on an educational program concerning the value of wilderness and how it may best be used and preserved in the public interest;

To make and to encourage scientific studies concerning wilderness;

To help mobilize coöperation in resisting the invasion of wilderness.

WE AMERICANS have today the marvelous wilderness that is preserved in more than two dozen national parks. Within our national forests there are 77 specially designated wilderness, wild, primitive, or roadless areas. Other Federal lands that embrace protected wilderness include national monuments, wildlife refuges, and Indian reservations. There also are State parks and still other preserves where wilderness is guarded.

The Wilderness Society's most particular, immediate purpose is to defend these dedicated areas. Its long-time, broad purpose is to increase the knowledge and appreciation of wilderness, wherever found. Its program of action for realizing these purposes is concisely stated as follows in a folder published by the Society under the title "Purpose and Program":

We publish a Magazine—*The Living Wilderness*—illustrated with photographs, paintings, drawings, and maps and including articles, narratives, poems, reviews, and news. . . . We make personal investigations of wilderness areas and wilderness problems. . . . We bring wilderness needs to the attention of those concerned with public-land policies. . . . We help to mobilize support for wilderness preservation and tell our members, other organizations, and the public about proposals that threaten this preservation. . . . We represent wilderness interests at public hearings.

. . . We attend conservation conventions and other meetings to discuss current needs and opportunities in wilderness preservation. . . . We join with other organizations in coöperation for the conservation of all natural resources. . . . We encourage our members to work for the preservation of natural areas in their home localities. . . . We maintain an office in the nation's capital to serve our members, coöperators, and the public.

IN ALL this program we are seeking to function as a faithful servant not only of our own members but also of other conservation organizations and of the public. We are seeking to function within the framework of organized conservation as it is being perfected today by the many organizations dedicated to this cause. We are not rivals of any other group. We covet, rather, the relationship of consultant to all other organizations in this so vitally important field. Our hope is that for all conservation groups wilderness preservation will become a major objective, and that for all these organizations we can be a source of information on wilderness, and likewise for all of them the sponsor of a special medium of publication, in *The Living Wilderness*. It is a particular hope that we may become a means whereby all local and regional groups concerned with wilderness can share their interests each with all—to the end that wilderness defenders everywhere can quickly and effectively make their united influence felt anywhere, anywhere that a wilderness resource is in jeopardy—whether it is San Geronios or San Jacintos in Southern California, Lake Solitudes in Wyoming, canoe country of Quetico-Superiors, or great forest preserves, such as New York State's in the Adirondacks.

The threats to wilderness preservation are tense, yet it is my firm and, I believe, reasonable faith that we are going to succeed in our preservation efforts—we Americans, we conservationists. If The Wilderness Society can be an instrumentality for making the conservation forces of the country more effective for this purpose, it will thus serve well its great purpose, I am sure.



BEFORE THE SNOW FELL.  
The Benson Cabin as it looked  
just before the finishing  
touches were put on it.

## Benson Cabin Completed

The Benson Cabin, named for ardent skier and Club member John P. Benson Jr., who was killed in action in Italy, has been completed and is now ready for occupancy after about 700 man (and woman) days of arduous labor during the past three summers by over 150 friends and members of the Sierra Club. Since the location of the cabin—at 8,350 feet elevation on the north slope of Mount Anderson (8,687 feet), five miles from Norden and over three miles from the Gold Creek roadhead—has made the progress of the construction slow and the problem of supplying the construction materials difficult, the success of the building program is due to the industry and perseverance of these people.

The cabin should be an attraction as an overnight stop either on a loop trip from Donner Summit or while en route to Squaw Valley, just six miles farther south. In addition the slopes adjacent to the cabin provide several good ski runs, albeit without a chairlift. The skier's route from the Sugar Bowl is over the east shoulder of Mount Lincoln and along the ridge which extends to the south, a distance of four miles, a skiing time of two to four hours depending upon the snow conditions and one's speed for a total ascent of approximately 1,700 feet.

The cabin provides bunks for twelve people, cooking stove and utensils, heat-

ing stove, indoor toilet, and a moderate supply of wood; however, no large stock of food is available other than emergency rations. The door and a second floor window for deep snow conditions have been left unlocked and the use of the facilities of the cabin is cordially extended to non-members. No fee is to be charged; however, any large group intending to use the cabin should check with the manager at Clair Tappaan Lodge to avoid conflict and overcrowding. ALAN STILES, *Chairman Benson Cabin Committee*



THE PRINCIPALS. (Left to right) Lewis Clark, President; Alan Stiles, Chairman, Benson Cabin Committee; Einar Nilsson, Chairman, Winter Sports Committee; Richard Burnley, Chairman, Lodge Committee. Their work, and that of scores of volunteers, has kept the winter-sports program moving.





(Left) The Benson Cabin from the north, with Mount Anderson in the background. (Right) The last shingles go on.

## Squaw Valley Opened

Squaw Valley is a familiar name to those who know and love the Sierra. For years it has been a favorite headquarters for pack trips into the high country above and beyond, embracing some of the most primitive territory in the West. Historically, Squaw Valley has a rich background. California-bound wagon trains pushed through the valley and on up over the summit of the Sierra to drop down to the headwaters of the American River via the Old Emigrant Trail. In 1863 just opposite the present entrance to the Valley was the town of Knoxville, a community of 1,000 people who were attracted by news of a gold strike which later proved false. Abandoned old mine shafts and diggings may still be seen in the valley itself.

Fascinating place-names dot the area: Powderhorn, Hell Hole, Whiskey Creek, Diamond Crossing, Five Lakes, Rubicon, Bear Pen Canyon and Lost Lake, to name a few.

Situated in Tahoe National Forest, five miles northwest of Lake Tahoe, this truly lovely mountain valley has long been con-

sidered an ideal spot for a year-round recreational area.

Blessed with one of the heaviest snowfalls of any region in the West, the high mountains surrounding Squaw Valley present a challenge that few skiers can resist. Their wide open slopes and bowls, and wooded lower sections offer a variety of terrain difficult to match.

Today the dreams of Wayne Poulsen and other pioneer skiers in the Lake Tahoe area are being realized; thanks to the efforts of Alexander C. Cushing, an energetic New York attorney, who organized the company and capital necessary for development. In six work-filled months, a giant double-chair lift, the world's largest, has been constructed on the face of Squaw Peak (9,000 ft.), a garage, a modern ski lodge, with every convenience for the skier has been constructed, a new 2½-mile, hard surfaced access road has been built from State Highway 89, a 1,000-car parking area has been cleared. On November 23, Squaw Valley will open, with all facilities in operation.

More than \$400,000 has been spent to make this the finest ski area of its kind, and this is only the beginning. Squaw Valley is more than a resort—it is a mountain community, with permanent, year-round homes going up all along the northern side. Several ski clubs have been negotiating for sites and more are expected to follow suit.

The double-chair lift, with a capacity of 600 passengers per hour, carries skiers to within a few hundred feet of the top of Squaw Peak from which point you can get a magnificent view of Lake Tahoe, more than 2,000 feet below. The lift line nearly parallels the Old Emigrant Trail, making one marvel at the fortitude and determination of our California pioneers. En route are two intermediate stations where passengers can get on or get off. Those going to the top have a choice of a score of routes to the valley floor, ranging from steep schusses to gradual descents that even the novice can take in his stride. Or, the skier may prefer to make the most of the scenery by taking a cross-country trek, perhaps to the new Benson Cabin on Mount Anderson, midway between Squaw Valley and Donner Summit.

BEN C. TARNUTZER

## Tramway Foes Joined

Tourists who look forward to one of travel's major thrills, a climb to the top of Mount Fuji in Japan, needn't be too alarmed that modern conveniences will balk that experience.

A proposal to build a cable-car line to the top of the mountain was recently revived by some enterprising Japanese promoters—only to run into a storm of protest. In fact editorial writers in the newspapers have waxed quite eloquent in their disapproval.

"Half the joy of climbing Fuji lies in the sense of achievement of a unique adventure, and in the pride of recounting the experience to envious inferiors who have not had the courage or opportunity to try it themselves," one of the scribes wrote.

"Only those who have toiled step by step up Fuji's slopes through the long night can know the ecstasy of seeing the dawning sun break through the clouds at one's feet to reveal the tiny world far below. Only those who have jostled with the chanting, white-robed pilgrims on the dark narrow trails have tasted the full magic of Fuji's enchantment."

Though the cable-car proposal has stirred up this opposition, there is quite an agreement, however, that certain improvements should be made for the benefit of the mountain-climbers. These include the improvement of trails and rest huts.

—Northwest Airlines News Bureau

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946, of *Sierra Club Bulletin*, published monthly except August at Berkeley, California, for October, 1949. State of California, County of Alameda, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared David R. Brower, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the editor of the *Sierra Club Bulletin*, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the acts of March 3, 1933, and July 2, 1946 (section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations), to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Sierra Club, 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco 4; Editor, David R. Brower, 2061 Center St., Berkeley 4; Managing Editor, none; Business Manager, none. 2. That the owner is: Sierra Club (a corporation), 1050 Mills Tower, San Francisco 4; no stockholders; Officers: Lewis F. Clark, President; Richard M. Leonard, Secretary; Robert L. Lipman, Treasurer. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: none. David R. Brower, Editor, Sworn to and subscribed before me this 19th day of September, 1949. (SEAL) Syles S. Browning, Notary Public in and for said county and State. (My commission expires July 21, 1950.)



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